

SPACEMAKER

McClellan Air Force Base, Calif.

Jan. 14, 1999 Vol. 40, No. 1

AT A GLANCE

Blood Drive

The first 1999 Blood Drive will be held today at Rafferty Hall between 9:30 a.m. -1:30 p.m. It only takes an hour to support our community by giving the precious gift of life. The Blood Center will have more stations than ever to speed the process. For more information contact Capt. Jim Thomas at 643-1001.

Commissary Closure

The commissary will be closed Feb. 15 - 16. Sorry for any inconvenience.

Holiday hours

Due to Martin Luther King's Birthday, the following are the Exchange hours of operation Jan 18:

Main store	10 a.m.-5 p.m.
Service Station	10 a.m.-5 p.m.
Shoppette	8 a.m.-6 p.m.
MCSS	Closed
Class Six	Closed
Concessions	Closed
Burger King	9:30 a.m.-5 p.m.
Anthony Pizza	Closed
Robin Hood	Closed
Frank's Frank	Closed

Service station shuts down

The Base Service Station, Bldg. 376 on Dudley Street, will close everyday, including holidays, from 7:50 - 8:30 a.m. The shut down is necessary to allow the staff to do inventory.

Martin Luther King Birthday

Monday, Jan. 18, is Martin Luther King, Jr. Birthday observance. 1999's MLK Day theme is "Remember! Celebrate! Act! A Day On — Not A Day Off."

See page 3 for a related commentary.

Spacemaker input

Ideas for stories are welcomed by the *Spacemaker* staff. Call in your suggestions to 643-6100.

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Someone was out of uniform ...



U.S. Air Force Photo by Laura J. Williams

Tech. Sgt. Mark O'Neill, 77th Security Forces Squadron flight sergeant, was promoted to master seargent under the Stripes for Exceptional Performers Program as part of the enlisted promotion ceremony Jan. 4. Above, 77th Security Forces Squadron's First Sergeant, Master Sgt. Daniel Cormier looks on as 77th Wing Commander Col. W.P. "Bear" Ard and Security Forces Squadron Commander Lt. Col. Joseph Wegner help O'Neill put his blouse on and get into proper uniform.

Joint chiefs request readiness funds

WASHINGTON (AFPN) - Calling the president's proposed injection of \$110 billion into the Pentagon's budget over the next five years a "good start," the Air Force chief of staff and other military service chiefs asked members of the Senate Armed Services Committee Jan. 5 to support a greater, sustained boost in funds for readiness.

The Joint Chiefs told the senators additional funds are needed to stem the continuing decline in readiness, reverse an alarming loss of people and combat increasing rates of aircraft cannibalization.

Gen. Michael E. Ryan, Air Force chief of staff, joined the chairman of the Joint Chiefs and the other service chiefs in requesting \$30 billion more in Air Force spending dedicated to readiness over the next six years.

This is in addition to billions of dollars the president has already pro-

posed for fiscal year 2000 pay and retirement benefit increases.

"We very much appreciate what the secretary of defense and the president of the united States have

"All our people are looking forward to ... fair pay and a retirement system. They don't just need it, they deserve it."

Gen. Michael E. Ryan

done in support of readiness," Ryan said in his opening statement. "We ask for your support in a continued campaign to provide our airmen with the needed equipment and the training and compensation to match the difficult missions we ask of them for their sacrifices and service."

Ryan's pride in Air Force people was evident. "Our Air Force men and women, and their commanders, have done great work in keeping control of readiness declines despite heavy tasking and tough fiscal constraints. Nonetheless, the mission-capable rates have declined," Ryan said.

The general told the senators his three readiness priorities are people, equipment and the training to employ them. He said if he "could put a bubble around this that enables it all to happen, it would be leadership." Above all, the service chiefs agreed, Congress must press ahead with the president's previously announced FY 2000 overall 4.4 percent pay raises, additional targeted pay raises for mid-grade officers and noncommissioned officers, and restoring retirement benefits to 50 percent of base pay for 20 years' service.

"Restoring the retirement system, narrowing the pay gap and implementing pay table reform," Ryan said, "are three tangible efforts that our people deserve and appreciate."

Ryan noted the effect of retirement improvements and military pay increases announced Dec. 21 by the secretary of defense and chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

"People are leaving the Air Force because they are concerned about their retirement benefits, their pay is not comparable to the civilian job market, and their workload and the

SEE READINESS FUNDS, PAGE 10

Action Line

643-3344

Action Line
77 ABW/CC
5241 Arnold Ave.
McClellan AFB, CA 95652-1086

e-mail: Actionline

Since I've been your wing commander, I've had much opportunity to hear from you on how we can make things better. This **Action Line** has been a key avenue and remains a good means to obtain feedback on how we're doing and how we can improve.

If you have or see a problem, try to work it through the responsible agency or activity first, since that will provide the most rapid resolution or action. If you still can't get the problem resolved, then try to work it through your chain of command. If the problem still exists after you've taken these two steps, then let me know so we can try to help.

In your request, please be brief, but include enough information to address the entire issue. Also, please let me know the specific action you want taken. I need your name, duty phone, and address so that we may send you a written response. I treat each call very seriously and read each response. If I feel the issue is of interest to the entire McClellan community, we may also print it and the



Col. W.P. "Bear" Ard
77th Air Base Wing commander

response in the *Spacemaker*.

Our overall goal is to better serve you. In this same vein, we also like to highlight those areas that provide high quality or exceptional support, so we can build upon and expand them. To do these things, I need your involvement.

I also welcome your input in other ways. On a quarterly basis, I hold Town Hall meetings with community members, and I regularly meet with various groups on base (the Chiefs, First Sergeants, etc.). Please plug into one of these avenues to get your voice heard. You have a say in how we serve you!

Base Phone Numbers

AAFES.....	920-0537
Civilian Pay.....	643-6725
Civil Engineering.....	643-5624
Civ. Personnel.....	643-2860
Commissary.....	643-4954
Crime Stop Hotline.....	643-6161
Dining Hall.....	643-5092
Family Support.....	643-1106
Focus Center #1.....	643-5661
Fraud, Waste & Abuse.....	643-6000
Housing.....	643-6221
Legal.....	643-3150
Lodging.....	643-6223
Medical.....	Appointments..... 643-8400
	After Hours..... 643-7212
TRICARE	
	Service Center.(800) 242-6788
Military Pay.....	643-6965
Military Personnel.....	643-1094
Public Affairs.....	643-6127
Retiree Activities.....	643-2207
Security Forces.....	643-6160
Services.....	643-6660
Social Actions.....	643-3322
Supply.....	643-5213
Uniform Questions.....	643-4051

Your Say

What was your New Year's resolution?



"To maintain my weight loss."
Nikki Patel
Laundry/Dry Cleaners

"Stop smoking and really, really get in shape."

Staff Sgt. Alan Williams
364th Recruiting Squadron



"Take better care of myself."
Darlene Stevenson
Space Division

"Quit smoking and get better educated."

Master Sgt. Ken Rice
Base Closure Flight
Free Issue Center



Mock RIF Blues

Q Some of us were given the opportunity to sign-up with the VSIP/VERA. We were offered money to sign or not sign.

Why were we not notified about the Mock RIF along with the VSIP/VERA? Many of us signed up for the VSIP/VERA with out knowing where we really stood. Why did this happen?

A On Oct. 22, 1998, when the VSIP/VERA notification letters were issued, the Mock RIF charting had not been completed.

The plan to issue Mock RIF letters on Nov. 30, 1998 was briefed in Town Hall meetings on Nov. 5-6, 1998; published in the Sacramento ALC Newsletter on June 8, 1998 and; in the

Spacemaker on Dec. 3, 1998; put on the SM-ALC web page and disseminated through the management chain on a regular basis. In the past, employees have been given a relatively short time frame to accept the VSIP/VERA offer.

The Dec. 15, 1998 was established so McClellan employees would have time to get all the facts before making a decision on the VSIP/VERA offer. Since a Mock RIF was being planned, it was felt that the results would be important in the decision making process.

We try our best to communicate information to the work force. We apologize because unfortunately the information did not reach all employees.

The heat is on

Q When is the heater here going to be turned on? It has been cold for the last two days. I have told the building manager about this already.

A We appreciate your concern about getting the heat turned on in your facility.

Until we received your Action Line, Civil Engineering was unaware that your building did not have heat. As soon as we learned of the problem, a mechanic was sent to fix the heating system. The repairs were completed that same day.

Whenever there is a problem in a building, notify your facility manager immediately.

Base freezer

Q Building 269B is freezing! People are coming to work sick, or wearing coats to keep warm. Electric heaters are being used and I heard they were unauthorized because they case fires.

They cannot give us a date when the heating is going to be turned on. Can you please help us?

A We apologize for the inconvenience you experienced with your facility's heating system. When Civil engineers started to activate the heating system for this facility, and found mechanical problems that required additional repairs. The heating system was repaired and placed in service the next day. A follow-up check was made Nov. 13, and the system was found to be functioning properly. If you observe any additional problems, please report them to your assigned facility manager.

Space heaters are generally not permitted for use on base because of the increased risk of fire associated with them. The exceptions are when the space heater would provide the sole source of heat for the facility or when an individual's physician documents a medical need. Approval for use of a space heater is good for one year. To request space heater approval or for information, call the fire prevention office at 643-5627.

Air Force Vision

"Air Force people building the world's most respected air and space force ... global power and reach for America"

Air Force Materiel Command Vision

"Quality Systems for America's Air Force"

Sacramento Air Logistics Center Vision

"Completing the mission of McClellan AFB with professionalism and honor"

SPACEMAKER

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SPACEMAKER

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(916) 643-6100

<http://www.mcclellan.af.mil/PA/spc.htm>

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Embrace the new year, be your very best

Col. W.P. Ard
Commander
77th Air Base Wing

It's yet another New Year, and we are one year closer to the "fabled" millennium. As we step off in this new year, I know that everyone is living up to all those New Year's resolutions we invariably make. These annual resolutions often focus on some aspect of self-improvement and being better prepared for the next year.

With this idea of resolutions in mind, I'm asking each of our community members to focus on ways to enhance our opportunities for serving our great nation and our great service. It is a good time for each of us to reflect on our heritage, as a nation and as military professionals.

This past decade has seen unprecedented changes in the face of the world: the Berlin Wall came down, the Soviet Union disintegrated, our country led the greatest coalition in history in decisively defeating Iraq, we enjoy unprecedented domestic prosperity, and we continue to broker peace and stability around the world. We even had two hitters break the "unbreakable" 61 home run barrier. These are unparalleled times, matched by unparalleled events.

While these are relatively recent events, the foundation for these times was laid years ago. In this light, we are obliged to remember the contributions of those

who've gone before us, those who laid the groundwork for our nation and our Air Force to be in the very center of these tremendous events.

As stewards of our nation's defense, we become obliged to also contribute to these winning traditions and winning team. This New Year, let's pause to ponder the past, and learn from the qualities of the Air Force and national leaders who made these great events happen.

I also urge everyone to remember our personal inspirational leaders, whether they are parents, teachers, supervisors, or simply a good friend. Like these folks who gave of themselves, we too can give of ourselves and contribute to making things better for those who work with us, and those who will follow us. Embrace the key notion of "Service Before Self." I suggest you ask yourself, "What have I done for others, lately?"

Your position in the community or on the base is not the key determinant of your ability to make meaningful and tangible contributions to our nation, community, and service. Your role is really more pure and much simpler than that. It really depends on what Dr. Martin Luther King called your "Life's Blueprint." I made mention of this great work last year, in this same spot in this paper, and I think it bears repeating.

In this famous speech, Dr. King

captures this thought of reaching outside yourself in a special way: "Don't just set out to do a good job. Set out to do such a good job that the living, the dead or the unborn couldn't do it any better ... If you can't be a pine at the top of the hill, be a shrub in the valley. But be the best little shrub on the side of the hill ... Be a bush

if you can't be a tree. If you can't be a highway, just be a trail. If you can't be a sun, be a star. For it isn't by size that you win or fail. Be the best of whatever you are."

By virtue of simply striving to be the very best at whatever we do, while at the same time working for a common good over self interest, we're doing the right thing. We each have an obligation to give something back, to make things just a little bit better for our successors and those around us. We all have been given prosperity and health unimagined a generation ago, which are the envy of the world. I urge everyone to take the passing of yet another year as a chance to appreciate our blessings.

McClellan has a long tradition of unmatched contributions to the community, and 1998 was no ex-

ception. This past year, we raised over \$600,000 for the Combined Federal Campaign, we were key

in making Sacramento's hosting of the regional Special Olympics a success, we supported Creek Week, we were right in the middle of another successful holiday foodbasket program, we hosted yet another JROTC encamp-

ment, we hosted The Drug Store, and we max'ed the course on our Toys for Tots campaign, to name a few.

These blessings are not without a cost. We must pass the legacy on to all those around us, and those who come after us, to apply it and build upon it.

It has been a genuine pleasure for my wife Jackie, our three children and for me to be able to spend 1998 as part of this magnificent McClellan community.

One of my favorite Yogi Berra stories is one he relates about opening day, "A home opener is always exciting, no matter if it's home or on the road." I feel the same way about 1999, it is exciting, and we continue to have great chances to contribute, at "home," here on base, or "away," in the community. Please take advantage of them!



Col. W.P. "Bear" Ard

Build your dreams and share in another

Gregory Schellhase
Deputy Director
Space & C3I System Directorate

On Monday, we will honor a great American whose profound words still echo across our country and around the world. His dream is closely tied to each of us, to our country and to McClellan Air Force Base.

More than 25 years ago, Martin Luther King, Jr. delivered his "I Have A Dream" speech on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial. His eloquence challenged our country and the best of our human spirit. "I have a dream that

... little black boys and black girls will be able to join with little white boys and white girls and walk together as sisters and brothers." He called out to us to fulfill the promise from Lincoln some one hundred years earlier. "I have a dream that one day this nation will rise up and live out the true meaning of its creed: 'We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal.'"

Most of the folks reading this paper have worked for many years at McClellan ... serving their country and providing the world-wide support of our country's armed forces so that we will have a shield of peace that ensures the democracy



Gregory Schellhase

of peace can survive. It is ironic that our closure is a measure of our success, yet there are many dreams which will require our continued efforts. We are moving our programs and depot maintenance and supply work to other places and we must do that well to keep our shield strong so that our democracy will remain. To you who will move on with our work, God's speed and continue. For us who remain, we will continue to help plan and load the trucks to send you and our mission on.

Whatever your path, we must work individually and collectively to bring Dr. King's vision to reality. His vision is not a dream of Washington, D.C., or of the South. It is a vision for McClellan, our communities, our state, the United States

and beyond. We must work together to eliminate the hatred, bigotry and lack of respect for human dignity and rights which will bring down our democracy from within. While neither Abraham Lincoln nor Dr. King meant that we all have the same strengths or weaknesses, they knew we must guarantee equal rights and opportunities without regard to race, color or creed. Our laws must be applied with equity or there is no system of justice.

Share this dream. We will live in a better place when this dream is a reality every day. Just as the United States and our democracy have ex-

ternal enemies who are ever changing, we must also be aware that the internal enemies of the dream of equality have changing faces — be they neo-nazis, skin heads, the KKK or a new group of terrorists.

Tomorrow will bring us all more changes and our friends, coworkers and families will be moving on to new chapters in their lives. I am already talking to some of our "McClellanites" from new locations who have moved on to carve out their new dreams. I hope that after the stress, the anger and frustration over the unknowns, you, too, can move on to find your dream ... the place you want to be, the things you want to do, the things you postponed until your retirement. Make your dream, share your dream, help others with their dreams. Become a dream maker.

On Monday and every day, remember Dr. King's "I Have a Dream." The power of human respect and equality are keys to all our dreams. And "when we let freedom ring, when we let it ring from every village and every hamlet, from every state and every city, we will be able to speed up that day when all of God's children, black men and white men, Jews and Gentiles, Protestants and Catholics, will be able to join hands and sing in the words of the old Negro spiritual, 'Free at last!, Free at last! Thank God Almighty, we are free at last.'"

Build your dream ... be a dream maker!

January Enlisted Promotions announced

Airman

Alissa R. Baker
Mario A. Belis
Nicole S. Davis
Dawn M. Holloway
Amanda Palacios
Jeremiah J. Horn

Airman 1st Class

Rodney T. Derson
John S. Dunham
Shaun D. Goodeno
David A. Mitchell
Munyuka Ngoyi
Rodney L. Randall
Michael J. Rocha
Joseph C. Smith
Youry A Tundidor
Romeo N. Wilson

Senior Airman

James M. Balzer
Anthony D. Cruz
Michael J. Phillips
Bradford C. Poetter
Teri L. Soto
Michelle Sredinski
Erich Strausbaugh
Kimberly Murchison

Staff Sgt.

Michael B. Dedmon

Bryan E. Jones
Christopher I. Rech
Jeffrey D. Slay
Eric M. Speelman
Suzanne L. Winovich

Tech. Sgt.

Matthew H. Dana
David J. Ritter
Husain H. Shaheed
Mark W. Talbert

Master Sgt.

Geronimo P. Galban
Frederick Jones
Mark O’Niell

Senior Master Sgt.

Carl J. Bullock
Darryl E. Morris
Valentino P. Ubaldo



U.S. Air Force Photo by Laura J. Williams

Command Chief Master Sgt. Len Czepiel gives a McClellan coin to Airman 1st Class Michael Rocha, instalation patrolman with the 77th Security Forces Squadron, following his promotion Jan. 4.

AT&T to open new Sacramento site, will recruit 290 at McClellan Job Fair

AT&T is opening a new site in Sacramento and is recruiting for 290 local vacancies as well as other positions nationwide. Jobs include clerical, technical, and professional positions for immediate fill. McClellan employees are offered first opportunity

for these positions. Representatives will be in FOCUS Center #1, Bldg. 9, Jan. 26 from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. They request you bring a resume whether you drop in for general information or call ahead for a one on one interview. For an appointment, call 643-6808.

Focus Center Jobs

This section contains some of the job announcements available at the McClellan FOCUS Centers. For additional information, contact one of the FOCUS Centers: #1 643-5661; #2, 643-0086; #3, 643-6808. Focus Center #1 is open until 7 p.m Thursdays.

Position: Medical Instrument Tech, GS-649-06
Annc#: 98-145DD
Close: Jan. 19
Agency: Veteran Health Administration
Location: Sacramento
POC: (925) 372-2120
Remarks: Review vacancy announcement and contact agency for information.

Position: Cash Clerk, GS-530-04
Annc#: 89-99-DECA
Close: Jan. 20
Agency: Defense Commissary Agency
Location: Sacramento
POC: Angela Carlson, (180) 054-7842
Remarks: Review vacancy announcement and contact agency for information.

Position: Computer Specialist, GS-334-11
Annc#: PSW-089-99
Close: Jan. 19
Agency: Forest Service
Location: Placerville
POC: Elvira Metcalfe (510) 559-6357
Remarks: Review vacancy announcement and contact agency for information.

Position: Accountant, GS-510-11/12
Annc#: SNR9819
Close: Jan. 19
Agency: Dept. of Energy, Western Area Power

Location: Folsom
Jobline: (916) 4535
Remarks: Review vacancy announcement and contact agency for information.

Position: Resource Specialist, GS-1101-09
Annc#: R511-004-99
Close: Feb. 2
Agency: Forest Service
Location: Quincy
POC: Judy Isbell (530) 283-2050
Remarks: Check Area of Consideration before applying. Review vacancy announcement and contact agency for information.

Position: Examiner (Assistant), CG-570-09
Annc#: 99-WDEU-B002
Close: Jan. 22
Agency: Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation
Location: Sacramento
POC: Diane McKee, (415) 808-8142
Remarks: Review vacancy announcement and contact agency for information.

Position: Hydro Technician, GS-1316-05/09
Annc#: USGS-W-98-3341
Close: Jan. 15
Agency: Geological Survey
Location: Sacramento
POC: (206) 553-0888

Remarks: Review vacancy announcement and contact agency for information.

Position: Personnel Management Specialist, GS-201-07/09
Annc#: USGS-W-98-374
Close: Jan. 15
Agency: Geological Survey
Location: Menlo Park
POC: Roy Balagot (650) 329-4120
Remarks: Review vacancy announcement and contact agency for information.

Position: Certified Respiratory Technician, GS-640-07
Annc#: 99-07DD
Close: Jan. 21
Agency: Veterans Health Administration
Location: Sacramento
POC: (925) 372-2120
Remarks: Review vacancy announcement and contact agency for information.

Position: Environmental Specialist, GS-401-13
Annc#: BOR-MP-99-04
Close: Jan. 22
Agency: Bureau of Reclamation
Location: Sacramento
POC: Inga Chow (916) 978-5471
Remarks: Review vacancy announcement and contact agency for information.

Prepare early to beat tax deadline

William Lackermann, Jr.
Staff Judge Advocate Office

That time of year is here again — time to check the mail for W-2 tax forms and begin gathering together the information you'll need to complete your federal and state income tax returns. While you don't have to file your tax return until April 15, some recent changes in the tax laws and technology may give you reasons to begin preparing your return earlier.

Changes in the tax laws: Some changes are minor (e.g., make checks payable to the "United States Treasury" rather than the past practice of making checks payable to the "Internal Revenue Service"). However, some changes are quite significant and will benefit many military members.

Taxpayers may now claim a tax credit of \$400 for each of their qualifying children who are age 17 years or under as of Dec. 31, 1998. A qualifying child is a child, grandchild, or stepchild, who is a U.S. citizen or resident, for whom you can claim a dependency exemption. A credit is very beneficial since it results in a dollar-for-dollar reduction in the tax you owe.

There are several new tax benefits for higher education. There are two new education credits — the Hope Credit and the Lifetime Learning Credit. There are also provisions for education Individual Retirement Accounts and deductions for interest paid on qualified student loans.

•Hope Credit allows a tax credit of up to \$1,500 per student, per year for tuition and fees paid after Dec. 31, 1997 for the first two years of college. The credit is equal to the first \$1,000 of tuition and fees a taxpayer pays and 50 percent of the next \$1,000 for a total of \$1500. It's not restricted to your children; spouses who qualify as students are eligible, too. For the Hope Credit,

the student must be taking at least half of the normal course load for one term during the tax year.

•Lifetime Learning Credit is available for educational expenses for your dependent, spouse, or yourself paid after June 30, 1998. The credit is 20 percent of up to \$5,000 for tuition and fees, for a maximum of \$1,000. The maximum goes up in 2003 to \$2,000. Unlike the Hope Credit, the Lifetime Learning Credit has no course load requirement. The Lifetime Learning Credit is available for college and post-graduate courses. It is also available for courses at an eligible institution to acquire or improve job skills—an important resource for McClellan personnel who are affected by the base closing.

While contributions to an educational IRA do not give you any immediate tax benefit, the long-term benefit is that the earnings in the IRA accumulate tax free. The new Roth IRA works in a similar fashion — you do not get any immediate tax benefit, but the long-term benefit is that the earnings in the IRA accumulate tax free.

•Sales of a house rules have also had favorable changes. It used to be that you could roll over the gain from the sale of a home and defer tax. At age 55 and above, there was a one-time \$125,000 exclusion of gain on the sale of the house.

Now Congress has changed the rules. Regardless of age, there is currently a \$500,000 exclusion (married filing joint) or \$250,000 (single filer) on reporting as income the gain on the sale of a home you own if you lived in the house for two out of the last five years.

Should the seller(s) be forced to move due to a job or health reasons before living in the home for the required two years out of five, there would be a proration of the amount of the gain. For example, if the seller(s) only lived in the house for one year and then moved due to a new job,



McClellan Tax Center

- VITA (Volunteer Income Tax Assistance)
- Free tax assistance
- Federal and California personal income tax return
- For the McClellan community
- Will open Feb. 3
- Mon. - Fri.
9 a.m. to noon and from 1 to 4 p.m.
- North-east corner of Bldg. 250HH
- Call 643-2437 for an appointment

the seller(s) could still exclude half of \$500,000 (married filing joint) or half of \$250,000 (single filer).

•Changes in technology: More people own personal computers and the IRS and state governments have adapted tax returns to accommodate this technology. Tax preparation software is inexpensive, user-friendly and will often alert you to tax benefits about which you were unaware, such as the new changes in the tax laws, described above. Several software tax preparation programs allow you to file your return electronically with the IRS and most state governments.

The IRS and all state governments now have web sites on the Internet where you can download forms, get information and ask questions. Due to electronic commerce means, you can get your refund quicker by using direct deposit or direct debit if you owe taxes.

Air Force seeks Special Tactics candidates

RANDOLPH AIR FORCE BASE, Texas - The Special Tactics Recruiting Team will visit McClellan Air Force Base, tomorrow and Saturday. The team is looking for active duty first and second-term airmen and prior service members who want to join an elite team of combat control and pararescue operators.

The team will conduct briefings and take applications from male volunteers who want to cross-train into two of the most challenging career fields in the Air Force - combat control and pararescue. To be eligible, active-duty candidates must have at least 24 months total active federal military service. In addition to cross trainees, prior service members from all branches of the service may ap-

ply. Current law restricts women from ground combat roles, so only men may apply.

Briefings will be held tomorrow in Bldg. 10, Military Personnel Flight Conference Room, at 9 a.m. and 1 p.m. Spouses are highly encouraged to attend this briefing so they fully understand the challenges and rewards of being a pararescueman or combat controller. Those who qualify may be released from their current career field after team members receive approval from the Air Force Personnel Center located at Randolph Air Force Base, Texas.

Volunteers will be administered the Physical Abilities and Stamina Test and a Class III flight physical

will be scheduled during the team's visit to qualify for the indoctrination course at Lackland Air Force Base, Texas.

A pararescueman is a combat search and rescue specialist and nationally registered Emergency Medical Technician with an in-depth knowledge of combat trauma treatment.

A combat controller is a certified air traffic controller trained to operate in remote hostile areas to enhance the rapid introduction of friendly forces through air and ground force integration.

Both are precision parachutists who are skilled in scuba, amphibious, survival and evasion techniques. Their wartime mission involves insertion behind enemy lines at night to rescue downed airmen or to establish assault zones for friendly aircraft and troops.

After completion of the indoctrination course, the trainees will enter an arduous training pipeline consisting of US Army Basic Airborne School, US Army Special

Forces SCUBA and Military Freefall Schools, USAF combat survival school. Pararescuemen then enter the Pararescue school where they learn tactics, aircrew skills and medical procedures.

Combat controllers attend Air Force Air Traffic Control School where they become certified in Federal Aviation Administration air traffic control procedures and then to Combat Control School where they learn special tactics and techniques for putting it all together.

Currently, people in the two career fields earn one of the highest reenlistment bonuses and, in addition to their normal salary, earn nearly \$500 per month in additional pay. Members of the career fields maintain readiness to travel anywhere in the world to do their job.

Upon completion of their training, the members wear distinctive berets - scarlet for combat controllers, maroon for pararescuemen - signifying they are members of Air Force Special Tactics. "First there, so that others may live."

For more information, call Staff Sgt. Thad Payne at 643-4512.

PAST Test

The PAST test must be completed in the order below, within a 3-hour timeframe:

- Swim 25 meters underwater (without surfacing) followed by a 5-minute rest.
- Swim 1000 meters (crawl or side-stroke) in 26 minutes (30-minute rest)
- Run 1.5 miles in 10 minutes, 30 seconds or less (10-minute rest)
- Complete a minimum of eight chin-ups within one minute (3-minute rest)
- Complete a minimum of 50 sit-ups within two minutes (3-minute rest)
- Complete a minimum of 50 push-ups within two minutes (3-minute rest)
- Complete a minimum of 50, four-count flutter kicks within two minutes

Defense Secretary announces significant pay and retirement improvements for FY 2000

Master Sgt. Linda Brandon
Air Force Print News

WASHINGTON — With the full support of the president and Joint Chiefs of Staff, Defense Secretary William Cohen announced Dec. 21 a proposal for significant pay increases and retirement improvements for the fiscal year 2000 budget.

Air Force senior leaders lauded the announcement after working closely with Department of Defense officials to push for reform. "These changes reflect our commitment to the men and women who we've tasked with a very tough but vital mission," said Whit Peters, acting secretary of the Air Force. "It's just one example that we have taken their problems to heart and are working hard to solve as many of them as we can."

The Department of Defense's pay and retirement package has three main parts and is designed to attract and retain the type of high-quality force credited with the recent success of Operation Desert Fox.

"These reforms focus on readiness and retention concerns," Gen. Michael Ryan, Air Force chief of staff said. Ninety percent of the Air Force's enlisted force will face a reenlistment decision between now and 2001, and "they need to feel confident that we not only have their best interests at heart, but that the nation appreciates their service."

"Today's announcement should leave no doubt that we are committed to what's needed to continue to make an Air Force career professionally and personally satisfying," Ryan said.

The first improvement is a 4.4 percent across-the-board pay raise for fiscal year 2000. This will immediately put more money into every service member's pocket. Ultimately, it will also have a direct and positive impact on retirement

pay which is based on basic pay.

This will be the largest pay increase since 1982 and is scheduled to be followed by annual increases of 3.9 percent through 2005. While this increase will not close the military pay gap with the civilian economy, it keeps everyone slightly ahead of private sector wage growth.

"This increase is the largest in basic military pay in nearly a generation and it compensates our service members adequately and fairly," Cohen said. The raise also ensures competitive entry-level pay.

The second improvement targets raises for noncommissioned officers and mid-grade commissioned officers. These will range from one-half of one percent to 5.5 percent.

"This will enable us to do a better job of rewarding performance; compensating people for their skills, education and experience; and encouraging them to continue their military service," the secretary said.

"This isn't just about money, it's about people," said Chief Master Sgt. of the Air Force Eric Benken. "If the Air Force is going to continue to attract and retain the best and the brightest, they have to know their talents are recognized and we support their efforts to excel — that's the real bottom line," said the Air Force's senior enlisted leader.

The targeted pay raises are proposed to take effect July 1, 2000 and are in addition to the 4.4 percent raise everybody receives Jan. 1, 2000.

Part two also includes the first systematic reform of the pay table in nearly 50 years. Over the years the pay table has been distorted to the point where some raises for promotion are dis-

proportionately low while raises based on longevity are high. Pay table reform alters this to reward skill and performance, making promotion more financially rewarding than simple longevity.

The third part of the package, improvement of the retirement system affects two-thirds of the men and women in today's armed forces.

"The retirement system that applies to service members who entered after 1986 is a major source of dissatisfaction," Cohen said. "They receive 40 percent of their basic pay when they retire after 20 years, while members who began their service prior to 1986 receive 50 percent."

This is a change made in the Cold War era following large pay raises. "Today, in this uncertain time of high demand and smaller forces, this retirement change — popularly known as "redux" — is undermining morale and it's hurting retention," Cohen said.

"We are committed to what's needed to continue to make an Air Force career professionally and personally satisfying."

Gen. Michael E. Ryan

"Therefore, we are committed to returning the 20-year retirement to 50 percent of base pay."

"The current retirement system is not an incentive for quality people to remain in the service," Ryan said. "We need to change it."

The proposed legislation to change the law and improve the retirement system will accompany next year's budget submission. "We are working to install that retirement system in time to benefit those who leave the service in the first half of the next decade," Ryan said. "Those are the people who are making the decisions today

SEE PAY AND RETIREMENT, PAGE 10

Valves improve McClellan's water system

Dawn Young
Staff Writer

As privatization of McClellan Air Force Base nears, there are a number of items the Air Force is completing in order to make the hand-off of McClellan to county officials

easier.

One item that is currently flowing through the lines to completion is the way in which water is controlled on the installation.

"The Air Force is replacing or installing between 60 to 75 water valves," said Jeff Pluth, project man-

ager and employee for Boeing North American Service Inc. The Simplified Acquisition of Base Engineering Requirements delivery order was awarded to Sanders Engineering Company to implement. "We were awarded the delivery order in October 1997," said Staurt Webb, project manager with Sanders Engineering.

The project was on suspension until the Air Force started a push to get it completed, said Pluth. Sanders subcontracted out to Industrial Piping Specialists in order to meet the demands of the Air Force. All of the work should be completed by early February. "We did not immediately start work on the valves, even though it had been awarded to us, because the Air Force was deciding whether or not to carry out the work," said Webb. "Once we got the go ahead, which was this past September, we have been focused on completing the job. We have 42 valves in place throughout the base."

A crew, created with people from the 77th Civil Engineer Squadron, Dames & Moore, Sanders, IPS and

BNASI, is looking over old plans and utility maps to see where there are current water tees and cut-off valves and then deciding where new valves can and should be added. "By adding the valves, we are creating smaller entities," explained Pluth.

When the Air Force occupied the space, it was used as one mass entity. Now as the base prepares for privatization, the space will be broken up into smaller sections. As the area is turned over for privatization, the North Ridge Water Company will handle the water distribution. With the addition of the valves to the water mains, if North Ridge ever needed to shut off the water, the number of people affected is now reduced. "Instead of shutting off the water to the entire block, per say, now only a quarter of the block, where the problem is located, will be shut down," said Pluth.

"The new valves will help North Ridge isolate any water problems that may arise down the road," said Webb. "It is definitely a plus for any industry that moves into this area."



U.S. Air Force Photo by Dawn Young

Sanders Engineering Company workers cut a McClellan water system pipe to install a tee and a cut-off valve Dec. 23.

Network urgent care clinic can save you money

Courtesy of 77th Medical Group

Immediate Care Medical Clinic is our newest TRICARE Prime Network urgent care clinic. TRICARE Prime enrollees should always use Network urgent care clinics to avoid significant out-of-pocket costs.

The co-pay for Prime members using a TRICARE Network urgent care clinic is only \$6 for family members of E4 and below and \$12 for all other family members. Active duty members do not pay any co-pays.

Immediate Care Medical Clinic is located on Elkhorn Blvd., near base housing and McClellan Air Force Base. Listed below are all the TRICARE Network urgent

TRICARE Network Urgent Care Clinics			
Name	Address	Phone	Hours
VA Urgi-Center	Mather Field Rd, Rancho Cordova	366-5407	24 hours
Med 7	4156 Manzanita Ave., Carmichael	488-6337	9 a.m - 9 p.m.
Med 7	3100 Douglas Blvd., Roseville	772-6337	9 a.m. - 9 p.m.
Med 7	500 University Ave., Campus Commons	920-6337	5 - 9 p.m.
Immediate Care Medical Clinic*	5339 Elkhorn Blvd.	331-2800	9 a.m. - 9 p.m. M-F* 9 a.m. - 5 p.m. weekends

care clinics in the Sacramento area. Enrollees should contact their Primary Care Manager for an authorization number prior to going to an urgent care clinic.

Active duty members and those family members who have chosen a PCM at McClellan

Clinic may call (916) 643-7212 for urgent care authorizations 24 hours a day.

Family members who have a civilian PCM, the phone number is on the back of their TRICARE Prime cards. TRICARE Standard and Extra members do not

need authorization prior to using urgent care clinics. However, they are also encouraged to use TRICARE Network urgent care clinics because they will get a discount over non-network clinics.

Primary Care Managers assigned

Courtesy of 77th Medical Group

All active duty members will now be assigned an individual provider as their Primary Care Manager. A PCM is the provider you go to for all your primary health care needs. If you need specialty care, your PCM will arrange for that care.

As you continue to see your PCM, your PCM will be familiar with your patient history to better meet your health care needs. Assignment of Primary Care Managers will be based on your squadron. Below is a chart that lists the providers and squadrons assigned to them. Please note who is your provider and request this provider each time you make a routine appointment. If this provider is unavailable for the appointment time you

want, you may request an appointment with any of the other providers. If you are already established with a provider other than the one assigned to you, you may continue with that provider.

Family members and all other beneficiaries will continue to be assigned to one of the three Health Management Teams: Green (Primary Care/Family Practice), Pediatrics (Under age 14 years), or Yellow (Flight Medicine). The HMT concept was designed to obtain maximum flexibility and access of care for TRICARE Prime beneficiaries. Your family members will have the flexibility of booking an appointment with any of the providers on the team or they may chose to request the same provider each time they make an appointment.

Assignment of PCMs to active duty by squadron	
1st Lt. Brad Doyle -	364th Recruiting Squadron
Capt. Clarice Konshok -	77th Communications Squadron
1st Lt. Joel Hill -	938th Engineering Installation Squadron
Capt. David Kim -	77th Mission Support Squadron
	77th Air Base Wing
Maj. Allan Anzai and	
Maj. David Cunningham -	77th Medical Group
Capt. Robyn Lakamsani -	652nd Combat Logistics Support Squadron
Capt. Laura Lekich -	77th Mission Support Squadron
	77th Operations Support Squadron
	Sacramento-Air Logistics Center
Lt. Col. Cheryl Maney -	Technical Operations Division
Maj. Penny Peterson -	77th Civil Engineer Squadron
	77th Civil Engineers Group
Capt. Philip Ford -	77th Security Forces Squadron
	and others not mentioned

Medical briefings for newcomers begin

Medical Right Start is a one-hour program to familiarize beneficiaries at McClellan with important medical information. The program is a series of six different briefings including clinical services, TRICARE, medical care, supplemental/alternative care, TRICARE Den-

tal, and Health & Wellness. Medical Right Start is used to brief base newcomers, but is open to everyone.

For more information or to schedule an appointment for the next briefing, call the Business Operations Flight at 643-8382.

Healthy Resolutions for the New Year

Karen Murphy
Navy Environmental Health Center

NORFOLK, Va. — If making resolutions is an annual ritual you observe along with New Year's celebrations, parades and football games, here's some advice from the experts in Navy Health Promotion.

Tony Marshall, Health Promotion Department, Naval Medical Center, San Diego, considers the New Year a golden opportunity to make a change toward a healthier lifestyle. He offers six strategies for successful resolutions.

●Tackle one resolution at a time; focus on one habit.

●Be realistic; set modest goals.

●Reward yourself.

●Don't become discouraged. If you don't reach your goal during the designated time period, don't quit. One overindulgence in food or tobacco doesn't mean you're a failure.

●Think positive! Focus on things you're doing right, and give yourself a pat on the back.

●Finally, get support. Health promotion, command DAPA, fitness coordinators and tobacco cessation resources are there to help. Give them a call.

Dr. Mark Long, Health Promotion Program Manager, Navy Environmental Health Center, Norfolk, Va., advises

writing the goal down, keeping it within eyesight and getting help from others. He also likes verbal affirmation, especially positive self talk in the present tense.

"One approach to New Year's resolutions is to switch the focus and consider beginning a new healthy behavior," Long suggests.

Lynn Klanchar, Program Manager in Health Promotion at Navy Environmental Health Center, offers a different look at New Year's resolutions.

"Instead of making a resolution, I do a simple but effective exercise with my closest friends and family members during the transition to the New Year," said Klanchar. "Reflect on two questions: What was your happiest day in 1998? Take time to think about this and discuss the meaning. What is the one thing that would significantly change your life for the better if you did it?"

The tradition of New Year's resolutions evolved from cultural and religious origins that incorporate concepts such as reflection, repentance, hope for the future and renewal. In 153 B.C., January became the first month of the calendar year, named after the Roman god, Janus. Janus possesses two faces, allowing him to simultaneously look back on past events, and look forward toward the future.

Look forward to better health!

BULLETIN BOARD



F.Y.I.



UFT Board convenes in April

The next Undergraduate Flying Training selection board will convene at the Air Force Personnel Center on April 20. This selection board will review applications for both pilot and navigator training. Officers born after Feb. 1, 1972 will be eligible to apply for UFT. Applicants must submit applications to Senior Airman Silvia Wadkins, formal training manager at 77 MSS/DPMAE by Feb. 19. Applicants should advise commanders or supervisors providing AF Form 215 comments of the application deadline. Those applicants requiring a new physical exam should schedule one immediately. All applicants competing for pilot training must also complete the Basic Attributes Test. For more information on application procedures, contact at Senior Airman Wadkins at 643-1093.



Money matters



BAH entitlements

Members moving from the dorms to an off-base residence no longer need to bring a copy of their lease into the Financial Services Office. The housing office initiates entitlements by forwarding the AF Form 594 to the FSO to start basic allowance for Housing. The member's orderly room initiates AF Form 220. This must be accompanied by an AF Form 1373. For more information call Master Sgt. Anderson, 643-6965.

Travel card news

The new NationsBank Visa Government Travel Card training video for all Air Force Agency Program Coordinators has arrived. Viewing of this training video is mandatory for all primary and alternate APCs and is recommended for all first sergeants and commanders as well. It takes approximately 15 minutes to view the entire video. We will notify all APCs of the date/place/time of this training. For more information call Mrs. Acosta at 643-4141.

Lodging expense exceeding the maximum allowable rate outlined in JFTR Vol. 1, U4210, or JTR Vol. 2, C4602 while on temporary duty may be reimbursable as an Actual Expense Allowance (AEA). This allowance can be up to 150% of the local lodging rate. AEA will only be approved if the traveler verified the additional cost is in the best interest of the government. The lowest approval authority is the Center Commander or Vice Commander. The request for AEA will be coordinated through the appropriate commanders/directors. The traveler can submit an approved AEA at the time the travel voucher is submitted for settlement. Staff summary sheet formats are available at the FSO. For more information call Master Sgt. Kilbourne at 643-6996



Wellness



LEARN weight management

The 14-week LEARN Program for Weight Management focuses on skill building in the areas of lifestyles, exercise, attitudes, relationships, and nutrition. LEARN classes start every 8 weeks. The next LEARN class will start on Jan. 20, from 2 to 3 p.m. at the Health and Wellness Center, Rafferty Hall, Bldg. 1403. Call the HAWC at 643-4648 to sign up.



Banquet



Awards Banquet scheduled

The Annual Awards Program to recognize Company Grade Officer, First Sergeant, Senior NCO, NCO, and Airman of the year will take place on Feb. 18, in the NCO Club at 6 p.m. The dinner will begin at 6:30 p.m. The winners in each category will represent McClellan Air Force Base at the Major Air Command level in competition for the 12 Outstanding Airmen of the Year and Company Grade Officer of the Year. This is a mess dress or semi-formal event. For nonmilitary the dress is coat and tie. For the ladies, after five attire is appropriate. The Guest speaker will be Maj. Gen. Robert W. Barrow, California Air National Guard commander. Free baby sitting service at the Child Development Center will be offered to Staff Sergeants and below. Contact your First Sergeant for additional details.



Education



Professional engineers examination review

The University of Missouri - Columbia is offering an opportunity for Civil Engineers to review for the P.E. license examination without going to a classroom. All you need is a computer connected to the Internet. The problem and solutions review course uses web pages and friendly e-mail conferencing software. Topics include steel and concrete design, highway and traffic engineering. Geotechnical engineering, water supply, wastewater treatment, solid waste, open channel flow, hydraulic machines and hydraulics. Students will receive a comprehensive review and reference text issued with the course and faculty provided example problems with step-by-step solutions. Instructors will answer questions on-line for the entire class. The price has been lowered by \$50 to \$545 (before Jan. 23) and anyone taking the course who fails the examination can take it again for free by simply completing module and course evaluations. You can see the course for free at www.missouri.edu/~ceewww/cyberpe. Credit course information at www.missouri.edu/~ceewww. Contact John Atkinson at AtkinsonJ@missouri.edu if you have additional questions.

Senior NCO academy course recalled

The Educational Programs Cadre, College for Enlisted Professional Military Education, Maxwell AFB, Gunter Annex, Ala. has announced important information regarding senior NCO correspondence course enrollment. The Senior NCO Academy Multimedia Correspondence Course, Course 5, was placed on "Hold," Dec. 16, for an indefinite period of time. Because of a potential software problem with CD-ROM compatibility with some computer CD-ROM drives, EPC made the decision to cease further shipments of Course 5 materials until the problem could be isolated or new materials provided by the contractor. This problem only effects those students who received their course 5 materials after Dec. 6, 1998. All senior NCOs who have received course materials for Course 5 since Dec. 6 must check their software immediately and provide feedback to EPC. Contact the Base Education Office immediately for further instructions, Bldg. 8, room 219, 643-4776, 9:30 a.m. to 4:30, Monday through Friday.

Now showing at the Base Theater

Meet Joe Black - Friday

Brad Pitt, Anthony Hopkins - The Parrish family's life is disrupted by the arrival of Joe Black. The family's life becomes complicated by the romance between Susan Parrish and Joe Black, for Joe Black is the personification of Death.

PG-13 (accident scene, some sexuality, brief strong language) 181 minutes.

Babe: Pig in the City - Saturday

James Cromwell, Magda Szubanski - Babe sets off on a journey that takes him to a far away storybook city where he encounters an incredible assortment of animal friends and learns how a kind and steady heart can heal a sorry world. Rated G, 107 minutes.

Movies start at 7 p.m. in Bldg. 1417

MLK tourney begins Friday

McClellan Air Force Base will host the 2nd Annual Martin Luther King Basketball Tournament, Jan. 15-17, at the Talbot Fitness Center. Tip-off is tomorrow at 6:30 p.m. The tournament will wrap-up Sunday with a championship game.

Teams scheduled to play in the tournament include: McClellan, Vandenberg, Los Angeles, Beale, Travis and Fairchild Air Force Bases, Defense Finance Accounting Service, San Bernadino, and Athletes of Action, a local team. For more information call the Talbot Fitness Center or Tournament Directors: Chief Master Sgt. K.C. Ward at 643-6322 and Staff Sgt. Kwanza Jenkins at 643-6660.

Services to hold NAF sales

The Services Division will hold two Non-appropriated Fund Property Sales of excess items tomorrow and Saturday.

The first sale will be open to the general public. The second sale will be restricted to military and government identification cardholders that have access to the base.

Entry for non-base affiliated patrons will be through Palm Gate and will require a visitor's pass. All vehicles entering and leaving the base are subject to inspection. A complete listing of all open sale items can be viewed at Bldg. 1439, Outdoor Recreation.

Jan. 15 sale

Items for the Jan. 15 sale include: snack shop machine, pool table, bingo system, rair cooking system, hamburger cooker, hot/cold combo food unit, frozen yogurt and fruit beverage machines, refrigerator/stove combo, deep fat fryer, gas and charcoal grills, and a juice dispenser. Most of these items are new or in "like new" condition. This sale will be held at Bldg. 1440, from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.



Photo courtesy of AAFES, HQ Public Affairs

AAFES vice is here today

The Army and Air Force Exchange Service vice commander (left) is here today to visit McClellan's exchange facilities and talk with base personnel. Brig. Gen. Rodney W. Wood, vice commander of AAFES, assumed the position in July 1998 after an assignment as the comptroller for Headquarters, Air Education and Training Command, Randolph Air Force Base, Texas.

Jan. 16 sale
This will be a first come-first serve sale with a limit on purchased quantities. Items must be paid for by cash or check and removed at point of sale on the day of purchase. Items for sale include: ski boots, poles, skis, bindings, kayaks, boats, lawnmowers, snowboards, backpacks, rollerblades, car top racks, and other items. This sale will be held at Bldg. 1440, from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.

For more information contact Master Sgt. Todd Collins at 643-6661 or by e-mail at collins.adrian@email.mcclellan.af.mil.



Youth Center

Today: Open recreation, 2 - 7 p.m.; gym, 2 - 3 and 4 - 7 p.m.; advanced gymnastics 3-4 p.m.; open snack bar, 2 - 7 p.m.

Friday: Open recreation, 2 - 6 p.m.; gym, 2 - 6; snack bar, 2 - 6 p.m.; skate night, 6:30 - 8:30 p.m.; grades K-3, \$2 - members, \$4 nonmembers.

Saturday: Open recreation, noon - 5 p.m.; gym, noon - 5 p.m.; snack bar, noon - 5 p.m.; Lock in for members only, ages 9-12, 8 p.m. to 7 a.m., \$5.

Sunday: Closed

Monday: Closed

Tuesday: Open recreation, 2 - 7 p.m.; open gym, 4:15 - 6 p.m.; snack bar, 2-7 p.m.; beginning gymnastics 2:15 - 3:15 p.m. and 3:15 - 4:15 p.m. Tae Kwon Do, 6-7 p.m. and moms and tots group 10 - 11 a.m.

Wednesday: Open recreation, gym, and snack bar 2 - 7 p.m.; Couples Communication Class, 6:30 - 7:30 p.m. To sign up, call Family Advocacy at 643-1518.

Rename the Club contest


Win one year's free club dues

The McClellan Clubs' will be a co-located at the Officers' Club beginning Feb. 5. Because of this change, Services will hold a contest soliciting ideas for a new club name as well as Enlisted and Officers' Lounge names.

The winner of these contests will be eligible for a year and 6 months free dues respectively. Club members are eligible to enter this contest and may enter up to five times.

To enter the contest fill out the enclosed coupon by Jan. 15 and deposit it at either of the Clubs', Library, or Services Marketing office.

To enter, fill out this form in its entirety, cut it out, and deposit it at the Clubs, Library, or Services Marketing office.



Rename the club contest

My suggestions are:

Co-located Club: _____

Enlisted Lounge: _____

Officers' Lounge: _____

My name is: _____

My phone # is: _____

I'm a member of the: Enlisted Club ____ Officers' Club ____

If I win the contest, I can prove that I am a McClellan Club Member.

Deposit entry forms at Clubs, Library, Services Marketing, or mail to Ronda Chesebro, 77 SPTG/SVK, 5241 Arnold Ave, Suite 2, McClellan AFB, CA 95652. Direct questions to 643-4822.

Commissary set to impose fees on dishonored checks

FORT LEE, VA – Customers who write bad checks in commissaries face paying a new administrative fee when the Defense Commissary Agency implements new business requirements recently passed into federal law.

“The great majority of our customers write good checks,” said Richard E. Beale Jr., DeCA’s director. “In fact, more than 99.8 percent of checks written to commissaries clear just fine. For the very few that don’t, this puts our collection procedures in line with other retailers.”

Beginning with checks presented at commissaries February 1, an administrative fee of \$25 will be assessed patrons whose checks bounce. The administrative fee will be collected by the commissary when the patron re-

deems the dishonored check. The only exception is when a check bounces because of bank error.

If dishonored checks are not redeemed at the commissary within 30 days, the military finance office may charge an additional \$15 fee. As has always been the case, if the customer takes no action after about 75 days, the finance office deducts the debt from the military member’s or sponsor’s pay. Military members will be held responsible for dishonored checks written by family members.

Previously, customers had a 30-day grace period to redeem their dishonored checks without assessment of an administrative fee or penalties by military finance offices. In fiscal 1998, patrons wrote 43 million checks to

Minimizing consequences of dishonored checks

Contact the commissary promptly upon learning that your check to the commissary was dishonored. The \$25 dishonored check fee is unavoidable, but prompt payment of the debt will save you the additional fee assessed by the finance office for delinquent debts and avoid involuntary deduction of the debt from your pay. For mor information call 643-4955 ext. 3314.

commissaries worldwide. During that same time, banks returned more than 71,000 patron checks to commissaries. Customers made good promptly on most of those returned checks, with only about 22,000 checks eventually proceeding to debt collection. The new fees are expected to help further reduce the number of dishonored checks.

The change brings the commissary in line with dishonored check practices and procedures used by the commercial grocery sector, military exchanges, and MWR (morale, welfare and recreation) activities, said Gary Lutz, DeCA’s director of Resource Management. Signs informing customers about the new procedures are being posted in commissaries this month.

READINESS FUNDS

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

time they are away from their families is excessive,” he said.

“All our people are looking forward to the actions that we take to provide fair pay and a retirement system. They don’t just need it, they deserve it,” said Ryan. “These moves respond to their concerns.”

The next step, he said, is to ease the heavy tempo burden throughout the force. This, he said, extracts a high price on people and readiness.

Ryan testified that establishing the expeditionary aerospace force, set for Jan. 1, 2000, holds promise for relief by giving airmen predictability and stability.

“Our people ask for stability,” Ryan told the senators. “That’s one of the first things they talk about when you go out in the force — stability and taking care of the families — and then they’ll go do whatever we ask them to do.

“People continue to be our most vital resource — they are the most critical component of readiness,” Ryan said. “The intense demands we place on them as they perform Air Force missions around the world require highly motivated, highly skilled, professional airmen. However, today we are performing more missions with fewer people. Indeed, today’s active-duty force is the smallest in the history of the Air Force.”

Air Force officials stressed that the president’s FY 2000 defense budget, which is still under development, addresses many readiness concerns.

Currently, the Air Force share of the overall DOD budget appropriation is \$65 billion, which falls \$5 billion a year short of fixing the readiness problems. The official proposal goes to Capital Hill Feb. 1.

Maj. Gen. George T. Stringer, the Air Force deputy assistant secretary for the budget, said the added dollars are needed “to do the job our nation has given us and to take care of our people.”

“As best we can tell,” Stringer said, “the president’s budget proposal to Congress will give us an added \$2.5 billion in FY 2000, or half of the \$5 billion we need. Over the full six years, FY 2000 through 2005, we’d receive about \$20 billion more, or two-thirds of what we need.”

That influx, he explained will take care of critical near-term readiness needs — especially with respect to people and modernization — and arrest the decline in current readiness trends.

People are the key to readiness, Ryan testified, and “we must ensure they have a quality working and living environment. We have a \$4.4 billion real property maintenance backlog - and it’s growing. We cannot continue to mortgage the infrastructure area of our force readiness - where our force works and lives - without significant long-term effects.”

In the wake of large manning reductions, the Joint Chiefs agreed that the armed forces have too much infrastructure and too few people to man every site open today. The solution, they said, is more base realignment and closures throughout DOD. This would pave the way to upgrade infrastructure at the remaining installations.

If the Joint Chiefs’ full requests were approved, Stringer, the Air Force senior budget officer, said, “the next dollars will go toward improving our infrastructure, to include military family housing, and then to modernization enhancements in such areas as airlift, training, communications, space and selected weapon systems.

Above all, the general said, any influx of funds must be more than a one-time add. “We need a sustained infusion of dollars for the foreseeable future.”

Ryan strongly agreed. “We are truly concerned about the downturn in readiness,” he testified.

“We must reverse these trends through substantial and sustained funding for the needs of our force. If not, the concerns reiterated today could turn rapidly into a readiness cri-



U.S. Air Force Photo by Staff Sgt. Angela Stafford

Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. Michael E. Ryan, joined the chairman of the Joint Chiefs and other service chiefs Jan. 5 to brief members of the Senate Armed Services Committee that a sustained boost in funds is needed to stem the continuing decline in readiness, combat an alarming loss of people, and reverse increasing rates of aircraft cannibalization.

sis tomorrow.

Asked as the hearing neared its end what the essential components of readiness are, Ryan said, “I think it’s confidence. It’s the confidence in their capabilities to do what we ask them to do, and that involves equipment and training and leadership. And it’s the

confidence in the future that they’ll stay with us because they know that we will continue to provide them with the means to do the jobs that they need to do.

“And finally,” he said, “it’s the confidence that we’ll take care of their families when we ask them to go do that.”

PAY AND RETIREMENT

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6

about whether to stay in the Air Force tomorrow.”

Cohen pointed out that these significant changes come in the broader context of a continuing effort to achieve adequate military compensation and benefits. In addition to basic pay and retirement, this includes improved allowances for housing, food, cost of living, targeted bonuses and special and incentive pay.

The total cost of the military pay raises for fiscal years 2000 - 2005 is \$14.4 billion. Targeted raises are expected to cost about \$4.5 billion through 2005. Changes to the retirement plan have no immediate costs. The first 20-year retirement affected by any changes won’t happen until 2006.

“We believe this package will be fair and effective,” he said. “We need to compensate men and women in uniform properly in relation to their peers and in relation to the larger economy. And the compensation system must help the services recruit and retain the high-quality men and women our defense requires.”

The secretary said “The leadership of the Department of Defense and the military services are deeply committed to providing for the welfare of the men and women who serve the nation so well and for their families.”

McClellan Crime Beat



Compiled by Senior Airman Lisa Baylis
77th Security Forces Squadron

The following incidents were selected directly from the 77th Security Forces Squadron daily police blotters.

Dec. 1

A civilian employee was detained in the parking lot of Bldg. 200 for driving while privileges were revoked. The individual was transported to the law enforcement desk. Actions are pending review by the installation commander.

The husband of a military member was detained at the Navaho Gate for driving under the influence of alcohol. Contact was made with California Highway Patrol, who responded and took the dependent into custody.

Dec. 3

An enlisted Army member turned himself in at the law enforcement desk for desertion. Contact was made with the appropriate Army personnel who confirmed his desertion status. The individual was issued a provisional pass and returned to her unit to face desertion charges.

The wife of a retired military member was detained at the base exchange for shoplifting. The individual's shopping privileges were suspended for six months.

Dec. 4

Security forces patrolmen responded to billeting for a report of a retired military member who would not vacate the premises. The individual was removed from the area without further incident.

Dec. 6

The wife of a retired military member was detained at the base exchange for shoplifting. The individual's shopping privileges were suspended for six months.

Dec. 7

A military member was detained at the base exchange for shoplifting. Contact was made with the member's commander, who responded. The individual was released to his commander. Commander's actions are pending.

Dec. 11

The son of a military member was detained at the base exchange for shoplifting. The dependent was transported to the law enforcement desk, pending the arrival of the sponsor. The individual's shopping privileges were suspended for six months.

Dec. 13

A non-base affiliate was detained at the Navaho Gate for failure to stop at a posted stop sign. Further investigation revealed the individual had several active misdemeanor warrants. Contact was made with the California Highway Patrol, who responded and took the subject into custody.

The son of a military member, currently on a temporary duty assignment, was detained at the base exchange for shoplifting. The individual's shopping privileges were suspended for six months.

Dec. 14

A military member who is not assigned to McClellan was arrested by the Sacramento Sheriff's Office for domestic violence. Contact was made with the member's supervisor, who responded to the Sacramento Main Jail. Civil court action is pending.

Dec. 16

The law enforcement desk was notified of a house breaking in Capehart Housing. Security Forces patrolmen responded. The crime scene consisted of a broken the window on the side door. Other evidence indicated individual(s) had then entered the home removing personal property. Further investigation lead investigators to believe that an occupant of the house had actually staged the crime. The occupant subsequently confessed. Command and civil action are both pending.

Dec. 18

A civilian employee was detained on James Way for driving on a suspended driver's license. Further investigation revealed the individual had several active misdemeanor warrants. The individual was issued a warrant referral and escorted off the installation.

Dec. 30

A civilian employee was detained at the Visitor Reception Center for suspicion of driving under the influence of drugs. Security Forces Military Working Dog Drug Detector Team responded to search the vehicle and found a controlled substance. The individual was apprehended, transported to the law enforcement desk and cited in Federal Magistrate's Court.

Dec. 31

A non-base affiliate was detained at Palm Gate for driving under the influence of alcohol. The individual was apprehended and transported to the law enforcement desk for processing. The individual's driving privileges were suspended for one year and cited into Federal Magistrate's Court

Military justice update

Courtesy of the
Staff Judge Advocate Office

Article 15s:



Date processed: Dec. 10

Rank: Senior Airman

Offense: Article 92: Failure to obey order or regulation (AMEX Abuse)

Punishment: Forfeiture of \$150 pay per month for two months; \$100 pay per month for two months, suspended; 10 days extra duty. Reprimand.

Date processed: Dec. 18

Rank: Staff Sgt.

Offense: Article 86: Going from appointed place of duty; Article 112a; Wrongful use of a controlled substance.

Punishment: Reduction to Senior Airman. Forfeiture of \$716 pay per month for two months; \$416 pay per month for two months, suspended; 30 days extra duty, suspended. Reprimand.

Air Force opens retraining options for security forces

RANDOLPH AIR FORCE BASE, Texas (AFPN) — Recognizing the need for recruiters and experiencing a more stable security forces noncommissioned officer corps, the Air Force is allowing some NCOs in the 3P0X1 security forces career field to retrain into recruiting.

Restricted since June 1997 to stabilize manning levels, security forces technical and master sergeants holding 7-levels are now eligible to retrain into any shortage Air Force specialty code, with emphasis being put on those eligible to become recruiters, according to officials at the Air Force Personnel Center here.

Second-term staff sergeants and below remain restricted from retraining, said AFPC officials.

Recruiting officials had noted a significant drop in attendance by security forces members at briefings by the Air Force Recruiting Service's Recruit-the-Recruiter team that travels from base to base in search of recruiter volunteers.

"The drop alerted us that we needed to find out why," said Lt. Col. Ed Burkart, the director of personnel for AFRS. "In (fiscal) 1999, nearly 14 percent of our new enlistees will enter into the security forces career field. We feel it's important to have security forces members represented on our recruiting force."

While AFRS is specifically looking at technical sergeants for retraining, master sergeants are eligible to retrain and are considered for recruiting duty on a case-by-case basis.

"The Air Force is unlike any of our sister services in that every one of our recruiters is a volunteer," Burkart explained. "New recruiters share tremendous career opportunities with young men and women across the country. Recruiters, in many cases, are the only military representation in some communities. We can't think of many people better than members of the security forces to represent the Air Force."

Recruiting duty has some unique benefits, Burkart added. Special-duty assignment pay, choice of location, a unique work environment and world-class sales training are among the top reasons many NCOs choose to volunteer for recruiter duty, said officials.

For more information on available locations and how to become a recruiter, call the Recruit-the-Recruiter team at DSN 487-3511 or 3512 or commercial (210) 652-3511 or 3512.

Those interested can also visit the Air Force Recruiting Service's internal web site at <http://www.rs.af.mil> or send electronic mail to Burkart at edward.burkart@rs.af.mil. (Courtesy of Air Education and Training Command News Service)



Top recruiter honored

The California Department of Veterans Affairs honored Air Force top recruiter, Tech. Sgt. Scott L. Brooke, assigned to the 364th Recruiting Squadron and stationed in Chico, Dec. 30 at the Veterans Memorial located near the state capitol. Brooke received certificates from Lee Bennett, the acting secretary of the Calif. Dept. of Veterans Affairs. (far left)

Loan consolidation may result in lower interest rate

Maj. Donna M. Clark
Staff Judge Advocate Office

Many active duty service members have more than one student loan. Some are in default on one or more of these loans.

In an effort to reduce the default rate for student loans, the Department of Education is encouraging borrowers to consolidate their student loans.

Under the consolidation program, the underlying loans are paid off and a new consolidated loan is created. The monthly payment due under the consolidated loan is usually less than the combined monthly payments under existing loans.

In addition, the amount of time to repay may extend beyond the time available under the separate loans. Finally, consolidation of certain loans may result in a lower interest rate than exists on one or more of the underlying loans.

There are two kinds of loan consolidations. The first consolidates student loans made by financial institutions, and guaranteed by the federal government, under the Federal Family Education Loan Program. The second consolidates loans made by the Department of Education to the student borrower through a participating school. The Direct Loans may only be consolidated under the Direct Consolidation program. If the borrower applies for a consolidation loan from the direct loan program of the department of education by Jan. 31, the borrower will receive a lower interest rate of 7.46 percent for this year, with a cap of 8.25 percent (or 9 percent for direct plus consolidated loans) over the life of the loan. If the borrower applies for this consolidation after Jan. 31, then the interest

rate will likely be higher.

Both consolidation programs offer a variety of repayment plans. For those borrowers already in default on one or more student loans, consolidation of defaulted loans is possible. The borrower must agree to repay and make three full, consecutive, voluntary, monthly payments on-time with the prior lender. Consolidating a defaulted loan will result in a credit report bearing the notation that the defaulted loan was "paid in full." The borrower will then sign a new promissory note, with a commercial lender, at a new interest rate and repayment schedule. While a "paid in full" notation is preferable to an unpaid default, there is no guarantee it will satisfy future creditors' concerns about a borrower's credit worthiness.

When a defaulted Direct Loan or Federal Family Education Loan is included in a Direct Consolidation Loan, there are collection costs added to the outstanding principal and interest. If the consolidation is under the Direct Loan program, the Department of Education will consolidate defaulted Direct Loans and then remove the defaulted loan from default status.

If you have more than one student loan, it is to your advantage to contact the Department of Education about loan consolidation. If you are in default with a student loan, the loan consolidation program or other programs available with the Department of Education may improve your credit standing and restore your ability to borrow from the federal government.

If you have questions regarding loan consolidation, you may make a legal assistance appointment by calling 643-3150.

Soldiers', airmen's home to care for their own

The U.S. Soldiers' and Airmen's Home is a retirement home for enlisted people who served honorably for 20 years or more and certain other veterans. The home, located in Washington, is a "total life-care community" for almost 1,100 veterans.

Airmen are eligible to reside at the home if their active-duty service in the military was at least 50 percent enlisted, warrant officer or limited-duty officer and they are:

- Veterans with 20 or more years of active-duty service and are at least 60 years old, or

- Veterans unable to earn a livelihood because of a service-connected disability, or

- Veterans unable to earn a livelihood because of nonservice-connected disability, and who served in a war theater or received hostile fire pay, or

- Female veterans who served prior to 1948.

This full-featured facility provides a number of activities and amenities, in-



cluding a fitness center, banking and post office facilities and transportation to local Washington attractions.

Residents also enjoy an arts and crafts program, a six-lane bowling center, chapels and a modern, full-service cafeteria that seats 1,400 residents and guests.

Health care is also a strength of the home, said officials. Community nursing and assisted living are available, as well as long-term care including intermediate and skilled care. There are also six daily shuttles for residents from the home to Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington and transportation to the Washington Veterans Affairs Medical Center.

More information is available from the home at (800) 422-9988, by writing the home's public affairs office at USSAH, Washington, DC 20317, or at <http://www.afrh.com>.

Federal employee insurance open season dates change

Douglas J. Gillert
American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON (AFPN) — The Federal Employees Group Life Insurance program enrollment open season will be from April 24 to June 30.

The Office of Personnel Management changed the open season dates for the second time to give agencies enough time to reprogram their computers. Department of Defense officials also pointed out the open season is a one-time offer — not an annual one, as reported Dec. 16 by the American Forces Press Service.

During the open season you can stop, start or change your life insurance coverage freely — changes normally are allowed only at certain milestones, such as marriage and retirement. Changes made during the sea-

son will take effect on the first day of the first pay period beginning on or after April 23, 2000.

OPM began phasing in other new insurance options in November. It eliminated caps on the basic term insurance and Option B additional insurance you can purchase. Additional changes on tap for 1999 allow you to choose unreduced Option B coverage when you retire or to retain Option B coverage if you separate from the civil service or are in a nonpay status that runs out. Option C family coverage also will change, allowing you to elect coverage in multiples up to five times the current amounts of \$5,000 for spouses and \$2,500 for each eligible child.

Forms and information about the insurance program are available on the Internet at <http://www.opm.gov/insure/life/76-21-1.htm>



Icicleworks

Icicles formed on this park bench on base Dec. 21, 1998. McClellan reduced the natural gas use and employees worked in gloves and hats as temperatures inside were only 10 degrees higher than outside.

U.S. Air Force Photo by Laura J. Williams